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# CHILD WELFARE

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# SECURITY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH\*

**Leonard W. Mayo**

*If children are really our most precious resource, we must develop an individual and national program which places first things first, says the League's President.*

THE meaning and implication of the word security have both broadened and deepened in the past quarter of a century; once largely economic in its connotation, it now has a totality of concept which reflects our increased knowledge of behavior and our concern for the whole person as affected by and as affecting the environment of which he is a part. It has acquired a new meaning as we have come to understand what Dr. J. Milton Senn has referred to as the "indivisibility of man," and as we have realized that economic wants, physical needs, social drives and spiritual yearnings cannot be regarded as separate and apart.

We know that the secure person has a serenity, an inner poise and an assurance that is more than skin deep. We know him as a civilized human being in full possession of his powers and as one who has come to terms with himself. We sense that security is the product of a harmonious relationship between the forces and demands that impinge upon us from without and the resources of a well-integrated personality controlled from within. Just as peace is more than the absence of war, so security in the individual is more than a lack of devastating conflict. It is a dynamic state, not a passive one, and it derives from something deeper than the satisfying of elemental and material needs.

Because it has many aspects, security requires many but related approaches. As a people we understood the meaning of "all-out war" during the days of the last world conflict. We have not yet fully grasped, however, that the building of the kind of world wherein people may seek and find security also requires an "all-out" effort. It is a task for all the people; for parents, teachers, social workers, clergymen and public officials. While we cannot hope to reach perfection in an imperfect universe, and while security for mature and reasonably healthy adults must always be regarded as a goal to be reached largely through their own well disciplined efforts, the problem of security for children and youth is substantially different.

For every single thing that a child or young person can and should do for himself to better establish his own and the community's security, there are at least a dozen which adult society must do for him. A child cannot remake an inadequate school system, organize a public health program, nor provide a needed agency. Youth cannot push back unaided the frontiers

\* Presented at National Conference of Social Work, April, 1950.

tiers of medical knowledge nor unseat a dishonest public official. The job of adults, in a world which is a child's world quite as much, if not more, than an adult's, is to remove the hazards to security, set the stage and help to create the climate within which children and youth may seek their own security on a somewhere near equitable basis.

If, as adults, we are tempted to lay upon our children a greater burden than they can or should bear in this matter, and if we feel to the slightest degree superior about our own security, we will do well to realize that a very thin veneer indeed separates the confident person many of us think we are from the insecure person we may actually be. "There but for the grace of God," cried John Wesley, "go I."

Hence you and I have a responsibility to ourselves, to all people in our communities, to the nation and, insofar as we can help to the slightest degree, to the world in bringing about in innumerable ways a state and a condition within which human beings may better find that inner security which all of us so earnestly seek. We know that there is no single answer, no patent or neat solution, but that the search will take us up the long, hard, tortuous road that leads to the ultimate fulfillment of the promise of democracy. Insofar as children are concerned, Lester Granger put it succinctly and well when he said, in a paper presented at this Conference, "All children want is to be safe and to play." It is just as simple and just as complex as that. It is to that problem and that challenge that the Mid-Century White House Conference on Children and Youth is addressing itself, and to which we who are here this morning now turn our attention.

The year 1950 affords an excellent vantage point, from which, like Janus, the god with opposite faces, we may look backward to the turn of the century and ahead to the year 2000 A.D. What of significance have we accomplished in the past fifty years in making the lot of children and youth more secure? What is required of us in the next half century if we are to make additional and urgently needed gains?

**Economic Aspects and Family Stability**—From the economic point of view, the record shows clearly that although the cost of living has increased manifold since 1900, our national production has skyrocketed and our annual income is vastly higher. As a result a larger proportion of families are on a more satisfactory economic basis than was true at the turn of the

century. There are approximately 48 million families in the United States. Five years ago 56 per cent of those with one child and the same percentage of families with two children had annual incomes of less than \$3,000—while over 70 per cent of those with four or more children had incomes well under this amount. Three years ago nearly one half of the total money income of the nation went to families in the highest fifth of the income groups. The two lowest fifths of the income groups together received about one seventh of the total money income. In 1947, when the cost of living rose 15 per cent, nearly 30 per cent of our families received no increase in money income and 20 per cent suffered an actual decline.

These figures, quoted in part from a report made to the National Commission on Children and Youth in 1949 by Katharine Lenroot, Chief of the U.S. Children's Bureau, were accompanied by a note of caution, which is repeated here in substance and emphasized; i.e., no set of obtainable figures on the income and general economic status of our families can possibly portray accurately the variations and range of situations that obtain at a given time. The over-all picture, however, is doubtless an improvement over 50 years ago. It is true, nevertheless, that even the best figures fall short of depicting the wide, individual differences that always exist. Thousands of migrant and farm-tenant families and many of our Latin-American, Negro, and Indian families are impoverished. Their children, too, are future citizens and represent responsibilities we cannot evade. Nor do we need go far afield from the communities in which we live to find examples of families which require special and skillful attention.

Wide differences exist as well among states and regions of the country, and, in general, the areas that are the richest in children are relatively poor in income. As a result, thousands of young children work long hours at tasks beyond their strength and 4 million mothers work outside their homes. It is conservatively estimated furthermore that over 3 million families live in houses that are decidedly sub-standard.

Divorce and other major disruptions of home life continue to threaten the security of children. It is generally claimed that for the past few years there have been substantially more divorces than was true at the beginning of the century. While some of the figures purporting to show increases in divorce are obviously inaccurate, it is true that the present rate of divorce is sufficient to give us pause, particularly since there are currently 6 million children in the country who are members of families which have been disrupted by divorce, death or desertion. In addition, 100,000 children last year were born out of wedlock.

**Health**—The health of our people has substantially improved in the past 50 years. The average life span is longer; maternal and infant death rates are down; the number of diseases that constitute a serious threat to the lives of children has decreased; sanitation has improved; public health programs have become as much a part of many communities as public schools; hospitals have increased in number and progressed in professional competence; the miracle drugs, new operating procedures, extensive medical research and improved medical training have almost revolutionized the general health setting into which the child of 1950 is born.

In spite of these gains, our experience in World War II saw one 18-year-old young man in every four rejected by the Selective Service, many for readily correctible physical causes. Although 1948 marked the lowest infant mortality rate in our history (32 deaths in every 1,000 births during the first year of life), in one state the rate was one death in every ten during the first year of life.

In the wealthiest nation of the world, over 100,000 children are born each year without benefit of medical care, and the National Health Survey reported over 1,900,000 children under fifteen suffering from a chronic disease or impairment. Some 12 hundred counties have no public health department or none worthy of the name, and our rural areas in general reveal a shocking lack of health facilities and services. With all our resources and research, and in spite of a widespread awareness among our people as to the causes and treatment of disease and ways of maintaining health, the United States is not yet the healthiest nation in the world. At least 5, and perhaps 7 countries, still surpass us in this respect.

**Education and Recreation**—As every informed citizen knows, the progress made in education in the last half century has been phenomenal. The further progress needed, however, will be greatly augmented if we become as conscious of the gaps as we are of the gains in this aspect of child life and development. Omitting any reference to the differences of opinion that exist as to whether our prevailing philosophy of education is sound, we know that in other basic respects we face highly serious problems.

The extensive survey of elementary and secondary schools made in January, 1950, by *The New York Times* shows that in spite of increased enrollment, large numbers of "substandard and emergency" teachers are being entrusted with schoolroom responsibilities they are ill-equipped to carry. In one state one eighth of the entire teaching force in elementary and secondary schools fall into these categories, in another, one seventh; and in still another, fully 50 per cent of the teachers are "substandard or emergency" appointments. In one state

nearly 1,000 teachers out of a total of 16,000 have not completed secondary school. Finally, while improvements in teachers' salaries have been made in the past five years in most parts of the country, there is still a long way to go, as implied by the foregoing statistics.

The *Times* survey reports five basic needs in our elementary and secondary school program, as seen through the eyes of the educators themselves.

1. More and better-prepared schoolteachers on both the elementary and secondary level.
2. Additional buildings, equipment and supplies.
3. Reorganization of school districts to eliminate the small and inefficient units.
4. A better and improved curriculum, particularly for high schools.

In the South alone, the survey states, leading educators of that area estimate conservatively that this year more than a million boys and girls will receive an impaired education. The situation in certain other parts of the country is equally serious in comparison, when one takes the per capita income and the economic picture of each state into consideration. The most conservative citizen must admit that the tax base in many states is presently insufficient to sustain education at a decent, let alone a respectable level. The mere broadening of the base of educational support need not necessarily mean the loss of local administrative control of educational affairs unless local citizens entirely abandon their responsibilities.

Also of importance to the security of children and youth are adequate opportunities for healthful and wholesome recreation and constructive leisure-time pursuits. There is no way of accurately measuring our gains and gaps in this field. We know, however, that playgrounds, recreation facilities, and personnel have substantially increased, and that public attitudes toward recreation and our philosophy as a nation concerning the necessity for recreation for all age groups have greatly broadened in the past half century. Large areas of the country, however, including portions of our largest and wealthiest cities, are still far from adequately served.

**Mental Health**—When all of the factors generally agreed upon as directly influencing the security of children are weighed, there is wide agreement that emotional stability and sound mental health are among the most decisive. It is sobering, therefore, to realize that the mental health of our entire population is a matter of concern. Over half the patients in our hospitals on a given day—some six hundred thousand—are suffering with some form of mental illness. Each year 150,000 persons are committed to

mental hospitals, a substantial percentage of them children under 18 years of age.

Dr. Karl Menninger of the Menninger Foundation of Topeka, Kansas, stated recently in New York City that a million children suffer from behavior disorders and that fully 50% of physical illness results from emotional conflict. Between 250,000 and 400,000 children under 18 appear in our juvenile courts each year, another indication of inadequate homes and communities resulting in emotional and behavior disturbances.

It should be borne in mind that while an estimated \$10 billion were spent last year for health and welfare purposes (\$8 billion in tax funds), that total is less than 6% of the personal income of our people. As long as 80% of our federal expenditures, furthermore, are devoted to defense and to meeting the cost of past wars, we will continue to be restricted in spending the public funds essential to the proper conservation of family and child life.

How does all this add up? How much better off than the child born in 1900 is the youngster who first sees the light of day in 1950? Certainly the 1950 baby has a much greater chance of surviving the first year of life and of living to a ripe old age than was true of his forebears. His parents have a better education and a deeper understanding of his physical and psychological needs. He will live in a better house, although perhaps in a congested neighborhood, and he is far less likely to live in a slum than the child born in 1900. His formal education will be superior and his chances of going to college will be enhanced. His opportunities for finding a job will be wider, and the probability of his marrying and raising a family in decent surroundings and under adequate health conditions is considerably greater. Children who are members of minority groups and those born with mental and physical handicaps find themselves in a far better situation today than was true in 1900.

The 1950 child, however, faces a more complex and demanding society than did his elders. His chances of contracting mental illness are higher, and the physical and mental hazards facing him as he approaches middle life are many. If one of the main criteria of real security is a national mental and emotional stability, we still have a long way to go.

Our present mandate may be stated as follows: What can the United States do in the next decade to improve substantially the basic security of its 50 million children? How serious are we about it? Is it an operable assignment? The last question is the easiest. It is an operable assignment, though admittedly a huge one, if we are willing to put first things first, mobilize our resources and make the necessary financial and other sacrifices.

The greatest hazard to security of an over-all

nature in both a collective and individual sense is war. There can be no lasting security for children or families anywhere as long as war or the possibility of it is a reality. This is true no matter what one's definition of security may be and it obtains no matter what other mountains may be moved to make more secure the future of our children and the children of the world. The letter written recently by a nine-year-old boy in New York City who wondered if he had a future, and who asked wistfully if it was worth while for him to work and study to prepare for a career if life itself was in jeopardy, is a moving reminder that even young children feel the impact of the fear and uncertainty that the rumors and rumblings of war have created.

The greatest single asset to security in the personal and individual sense, we are told, is the establishment at an early age of a mutually satisfying and warm relationship between the child and his parents. Such a relationship is invariably influenced by both internal and external factors. While we have assiduously avoided those influences which might tend to control the home, and should continue to do so, there is need to support all appropriate national and local programs designed to remove economic and consequent emotional pressures from family life. Any effective operation in this sphere calls for large-scale community organization involving many individuals and countless groups of people working voluntarily and cooperatively toward common ends. As stated earlier, this is a task in the performance of which an "all-out" effort is a first requisite.

As social workers, furthermore, we must seek a common ground upon which we may move slowly and steadily forward with other groups in the attainment of the immediate and long-range goals of security. We have long since reached the point where we can make no further significant advances without the substantial support of those outside our profession. We have shown that we can fight; we must now demonstrate that we can excel in negotiation. We have been crusaders; we must also become diplomats.

**Three Major Approaches**—The task ahead is not only one of social engineering, but in part that of helping to establish a new philosophical orientation, for as our material prosperity increases we stand in greater need of a sharpened sense of values. The task requires at least three major approaches, only one of which is thoroughly familiar to us.

The first is a basic attack on some of the causes of poverty. Seventy-five years ago this Conference expressed the conviction that poverty could be abolished, and in the intervening years there have been many occasions on which men have voiced that dream. We know much more today about human

relations and community life, and infinitely more about business and industry than we did in 1900. Since that time the social sciences have come into their own and we have a basis of knowledge and experience upon which to launch a far more intelligent and vigorous attack on poverty than at any time in our history.

Intensive studies of individuals, families and communities whose histories reveal a long record of impecuniousness are a "must" if we are to proceed scientifically in an effort to meet the problem at the source. Why, for example, does one group of families at a given income level and in a given community maintain a reasonably comfortable and healthy existence while other families of similar income in the same community fail to do so? Why do so many families remain below a level of self-support and become a drain on the community? These and related questions are of profound importance and cry out for competent inquiry.

Certainly any society with vast resources at its command and with drive and imagination, not to mention superb engineering skill, should not fail to direct its genius to the reclamation of impoverished areas of our country as a fundamental approach to the problem of poverty. We can, if we will, substantially increase the productivity of whole regions now virtually barren. The imagination and driving energy of business and industry with the cooperation of local, state and federal governments could establish broadly conceived programs similar in purpose to the "Point Four" program recommended for Europe, thus eventually relieving the economic pressure on individual families.

Experience has shown, furthermore, that the standard of living in some areas can be raised appreciably by encouraging and aiding small businesses and industrial enterprises indigenous to a given region. If carefully planned and conducted, such enterprises attract private capital and bring returns to both entrepreneur and worker.

The second major approach is concerned with the economic and social productivity of the individual. The employability of a large number of individuals can be substantially increased through the expansion and more adequate distribution of programs and facilities already familiar to us, including mental-hygiene programs and casework services in public and private schools and social agencies; improved vocational guidance and training facilities; and public works programs for those who cannot make the grade in private employment and for many temporarily out of work.

It follows that we must also go further in supplementing incomes that are clearly inadequate and

where the welfare of the entire family is seriously threatened. Social work has had extensive experience in this respect and has made a substantial contribution, but we need an extension of insurance provisions against serious illness, accident, permanent disability, and death of the breadwinner, and family or children's allowances or income-tax exemptions based on larger deductions in proportion to the number of children in the family. A well-administered and effective network of community services is of course essential not only for relieving the budgets of needy families of certain large items of expense, but in improving the economic status and social independence of the family. To meet this challenge properly we must strengthen and, where indicated, extend public and private services in family casework and public assistance, in child welfare, recreation, vocational guidance and education. This means a real partnership between voluntary and governmental agencies based on a high degree of mutual confidence. It is ironic that after giving voice to the need for such a partnership for many years, we are still a good distance from achieving a fully effective working relationship in many communities.

There is still a tendency on the part of some of those identified with public agencies to minimize or underestimate the role of the voluntary agency and to reduce it in some instances to the level of filling in the gaps after the tax-supported agency has staked out its claim. The attitude of some who are identified with private agencies, on the other hand, is equally unfortunate. A point of view sometimes expressed is to the effect that public agencies seek to extend their programs and influence to the point of virtually eliminating private agencies, thus obtaining "control" of child welfare and family life.

I do not believe that any responsible health or welfare official in a position of importance anywhere in the country has any idea whatever of thus extending the power or the influence of the agency over which he presides. The fact remains, however, that some do believe this. Such fears, therefore, must be faced and met by those of us who believe that to build security for children and families adequate community services are required, and that both private and tax funds are necessary to sustain them. Those who really believe that will constantly and consistently work to improve both public and private agencies in order to make both more adequate to their common task. The White House Conference of 1940 enunciated a carefully evolved philosophy concerning the respective and joint roles of public and private agencies which is still widely regarded as a sound and acceptable basis for policy discussion and working relations.

The third approach is the most difficult of the three. It does not lend itself to legislation or to other forms of action in the usual meaning of that term. It cannot be blueprinted or promoted in the manner to which we have become accustomed in dealing with concrete programs and proposals. It has to do with values and with creating the moral and spiritual climate within which our people may find a security that will endure.

The ultimate security we all seek must come largely from within, for man cannot live by bread alone. In the final analysis peace of mind and soul, and a faith in something larger than ourselves, are the bases on which lasting security is built. We cannot, in the ordinary sense, will such things to our children, but we cannot pass them on unless we first have them ourselves. Although it may require the better part of a lifetime to fully achieve such security, we shall deprive our children of their greatest heritage if we fail to give them a sense of the eternal worthwhileness of constantly reaching out for the best we know in an imperfect world.

Man cannot live by bread alone but neither can he live without it. The moral and spiritual climate we wish to create for the proper rearing of children will be a hollow mockery and a tragic contradiction unless we see to it that all children have adequate food, shelter and clothing and somewhere near an equal opportunity for physical and mental health. A major question facing us as we move into the next half century is whether the society that has produced the greatest material wealth since the dawn of time can also furnish the basis for spiritual as well as physical security.

We hold in our hands the only answer we now know to that riddle, an answer that has come down to us through the years. Our course is to lose ourselves in an individual and national effort designed to place first things first. If children and youth and families are in truth our most precious resources, we must develop and protect them, we must make them strong and we must keep them free. We know one more thing of profound importance, namely, that we cannot do all these things and at the same time have everything else that our selfish individual and national desires may dictate.

It is a matter of choice, and sound choices depend on the availability of pertinent facts and the presence of a sufficient number of intelligent and committed people. The facts are available and at hand, but we need an increasing number of informed and devoted people, both professional and lay, in both high and low places, to point the way and lead us unerringly to that security which is possible and attainable only in a free society and at the hands of free men.

# THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE AGENCY IN COMMUNITY SERVICES\*

**Martha Branscombe**

Director

Elizabeth McCormick Memorial Fund  
Chicago, Illinois

SOME question as to the role of the private agency in community services and its relation to public services has been repeatedly raised in this country for more than a century. At intervals, particularly since the turn of the century, this issue has been associated with significant extensions of governmental responsibility which in turn are related to or result from major economic and political changes. This reflects two significant phases of this question: first, the vital relationship of the private agency to both the philosophical precepts and the historical development of our society; and second, the fact that the role of the private agency in the community is not static, but subject to continuous change.

## Significance of our Democratic Philosophy

Voluntary undertakings in any sphere of activity are at any time directly related to and conditioned by the predominant culture, the historical sequence and current stage of development of the social, political, religious and economic philosophy and institutions of the society in which such undertakings are conducted.

Any generalizations, therefore, as to the role of the private agency, have validity only insofar as they relate to a specific place at a particular time. Even within the United States today we find great diversity, due to a multiplicity of reasons, including historical, cultural and religious differences and differences in the economic resources and political structures of the states and communities. The reality of this is sharpened as we look at the picture, for once removed from the Eastern Seaboard and the metropolitan areas we find the number of private agencies sparse in relation to the vast reaches of this nation, and the size, nature and purpose of these agencies as diverse as the communities they serve.

It is important to emphasize this matter of differences, for generalizations are usually treacherous and especially so when applied to the question under consideration, the answer or answers to which cannot be isolated from American fundamentals—the basic purpose of our democratic society, the true sources of the strength and vitality of our people. Diversity and

*The controversial relationship of public and private agencies is given a thorough going-over in this paper. The unique characteristics of private services, the writer finds, offer them a real part to play in our democracy.*

flexibility rather than rigid stereotyped schemes are inherent characteristics of the democratic process as we conceive it. In operation, such a process enables us to get the job done in the way that at the particular time seems to work best and that will in a specific situation best advance our underlying purposes and principles.

A strong belief in this guiding concept precludes advocating or adhering to any fixed formula. Rather it challenges us to re-examine the fundamentals of our democratic philosophy and the basic principles upon which we have founded our way of life. For only if we are perfectly clear about these fundamentals and have the courage of our convictions can we have confidence in our decisions regarding next steps toward our objectives, or view with vital and assured perspective this question as to the role of the private agency as it is raised at each stage in the development of our social philosophy.

It is perhaps unnecessary to trace historically the transition in thought and the developments in various phases of our national life that have contributed to the gradual emergence and continuing evolution of a philosophy of social responsibility as currently expressed in public policy. Nor does space permit elaboration of the significant part private charity has had in this evolution and the resulting impact upon our traditional concepts of philanthropy and charity which are rooted in our religious philosophies and doctrines. Bear in mind, however, that it is from this background that we gain sharper insight into current developments and controversies, and a deeper understanding of the obligation which at this crucial period in our history is incumbent upon each of us as citizens, and particularly on those of us in private organizations, to see that society does its duty in ways that preserve individual freedom while advancing the welfare of its members.

Although our society has developed into a highly complex one and tends to become even more so, our government will remain an instrument of the people to promote the general welfare of the people, and will be truly responsive to our aspirations for individual freedom, only if every citizen consistently and actively fulfills his obligations and takes a dynamic interest in the conduct of government affairs and in support of organized private undertakings for the

\* From an address presented at the Alabama Conference of Social Work, May 26, 1950. Excerpts from this address were published in the July, 1950, issue of *Alabama Social Welfare*, and this article is published with the Editor's permission.

general welfare. The real danger and threat of government power arises only when the individual citizen fails to fulfill his obligations and drifts into the habit of thinking and behaving as though government were an entity apart from the people, engaged in the pursuit of its own ends.

### Emerging Concepts of Public Responsibility

Up to the end of the 19th century and well into the 20th, our democratic philosophy of individual freedom, our belief in the dignity and supreme importance of the human being and the human spirit, was expressed in the laissez-faire doctrine of rugged individualism. This doctrine was implicit in all facets of our political, economic and social development, and characterized attitudes toward and methods of dealing with all individuals who became a charge upon the community, regardless of whether their needs were met by private charity or by local authorities.

It is unnecessary to relate the vast industrial, scientific and corollary developments which have contributed to the breaking down of this simple old doctrine of rugged individualism. But attention is called to the impetus the resulting transition of thought has given to the new social philosophy that has emerged since the turn of the century.

The progressivism of Theodore Roosevelt ushered in a period of energetic government, and in each succeeding decade our concept of social responsibility has through legislative, executive and judicial action been decisively advanced in the direction of positive rather than negative or passive public policy. Today, we recognize that it is the "duty" of a democratic government to assure the social well-being of all its people, and accordingly, when any type of service or assistance is needed from a source outside the family, governmental agencies have a basic responsibility to insure complete coverage regardless of race, color or creed. While this does not mean that government itself shall operate all such services, it does have the responsibility either to see that such services are provided from some source outside government or to provide them directly. Forged from new knowledge, painful experiences and changing conditions of life, this new concept of social responsibility, and along with it that of social justice, have given rise to expanding governmental services under local, state or national jurisdiction to which all individuals in need of such services may lay claim as a matter of right.

If undue emphasis appears to be given to the development of government responsibility, this is to be explained by the writer's conviction that developments, particularly in the past two decades, represent

a basic departure from the traditional concepts of charity and individual responsibility, and challenge us to take a long, hard, realistic look at the events of the past twenty years as they affect both the current and the future role of private services in our society.

At the same time it must be recognized that the practical application of this newer concept of government responsibility varies widely in this country, just as does the extent to which it has been accepted as a substitute for the old laissez-faire philosophy. And much of the confusion that exists today stems from the fact that while our political and social philosophies have undergone significant changes and are still in the process of change, the exact nature and scope of services that government should provide have not been clearly determined.

Bear in mind also that these developments in our concept of government responsibility in no sense negate our fundamental belief in the value of and necessity for individual or private initiative in all spheres of national life. Historically, we have adhered to the basic principle voiced by Abraham Lincoln in his statement that

"The legitimate object of government is to do for a community of people whatever they need to have done, but cannot do at all, or cannot do so well, for themselves, in their separate and individual capacities."

To this statement we would perhaps add "or through cooperative voluntary effort." This principle is as sound today as it was when this nation was formed. The application of this principle today, however, calls for understanding not only of the newer concept of government responsibility, but also of the underlying philosophy and motivation of private agencies.

### Traditional and Changing Concepts of Private Charity

Voluntarily supported services, sectarian and non-sectarian, are rooted in human nature and based on a concept of charity. Different faiths have placed different values upon charity and expressed those values in different ways. But regardless of faith, the motivation felt by the individual donor is strictly a personal one. Hence, the objective of the donation is selected by the donor in terms of his personal motivation or interest, and the recipient has never had an actual claim upon it. These characteristics of individual charity carry over to privately supported agencies, whether sectarian or nonsectarian. They are highly significant because of their bearing upon the emergency of our concepts of social responsibility and social justice, and because of their influence upon the role of the private agencies. This is also a major factor determining whether a private agency gives

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## EDITORIAL COMMENTS

### The League's Fall Board Meeting

THIS year when the League Board met on October 23rd and 24th there was an excellent attendance and an unusually fine spirit. It has always been inspiring to see how quickly people from different parts of the country, with different interests, and frequently different views, become a group as they join in a common effort to think about and seriously discuss matters of concern to the field. Perhaps more than in recent years, there was an unmistakable air of urgency and sense of commitment.

Both the mood and the tone thus established were aided by the participation of those members who were attending their first League Board meeting. They are as follows:

Mrs. Joe Hume Gardner, Volunteers Services, American Red Cross, Washington, D. C.

Alan S. Geismer, 800 National City E. 6th Bldg., Cleveland 14, Ohio.

Robert McDougal, Jr., 5611 S. Kenwood Avenue, Chicago 15, Illinois.

Thomas M. Peters, 475 Fifth Avenue, New York 18, N. Y.

Randel Shake, National Child Welfare Division, The American Legion, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Malcolm Vilas, Fidelity Building, 1940 E. 6th St., Cleveland 14, Ohio.

The League's Board now numbers thirty-four members including sixteen women and eighteen men. Twelve are professional workers and twenty-two are volunteers. Fourteen states and the District of Columbia are represented as well as every phase of child welfare and every type of agency in the League's membership.

Following the informal induction of new members, staff members reported on typical or representative phases of their work. It was an able performance and brought clearly to the fore the breadth and depth of the League's fivefold task of: *Analysis* (of child care problems), *Interpretation* (of values and principles highlighted by such problems), *Education* (both specific and general concerning standards of practice, goals and objectives), *Collation* (of the best in practice, philosophy and research), and *Creation* (of ideas, programs and recommendations).

The principal channels through which these broad mandates are carried out, i.e., visits to and studies of member agencies, surveys, research, regional and local conferences, information service, publications and interviews, were also discussed both as means and ends.

The concept of The Child Welfare League of America as a whole which is greater than the sum of its parts was never more clearly delineated than at this meeting. For a long time now the League's member agencies and the Board and staff have been moving beyond the concept of "trouble shooting" as the League's main function. It is of basic importance to assist in the development of improved methods in child welfare when and where the League can be of help, but no modern national agency in social work can stop there. An organization with a mandate such as ours cannot be wholly occupied with service to member agencies as that function is ordinarily understood; for if it does so to the exclusion of giving attention to the broad and the crucial problems that affect all agencies and all children there will be no substantial progress in the field.

Hence it follows that those who participate in League activities, who contribute to the League and those who pay dues are contributing also to the development of an inclusive program, to the solution of national problems that have local significance, to the promulgation and cultivation of certain concepts in which they believe, and to a broad philosophy of child welfare which they are helping to formulate and interpret.

The Board gave ample evidence of its full appreciation of the spirit and vision of member agencies in understanding this outlook. Recognizing that not all local boards can be expected to take as broad a view at this time as such a concept requires, the Board moved toward specific steps which would be taken to interpret the full implications of this philosophy both to member agencies and the field as a whole.

There were other inspirational aspects as well, such as the hale and hearty presence of Howard Hopkirk; and deeply encouraging aspects, including new evidence of leadership by our member agencies, the leadership of our Director and his new associate, and the devotion of our staff. Every Board member left this meeting with a new sense of direction and commitment and with renewed faith in the League's purpose and mandate.

LEONARD W. MAYO

## DAY CARE CENTERS

Mrs. Dorothy Beers, our staff consultant on day care, has had the opportunity to visit most of our member day care agencies during the past year, although she has other heavy responsibilities with the Child Welfare League in connection with her work with Regional Conferences. She is delighted to report that all the conferences planned for 1951 are going to hold Day Care Institutes.

At the recent Board meeting of the League, Mrs. Beers reported on the many requests from our member agencies for material on minimum standards for day care agencies. There also have been numerous questions about personnel standards, licensing of agencies and possible legislation on this matter.

Mrs. Beers spoke of trends in mergers of day nurseries and family agencies, with the resulting opportunity for more casework in the day nursery. However, there are some agencies in our membership who are unable to meet Child Welfare League standards in this respect, owing to lack of qualified staff, usually for financial reasons.

Mrs. Beers had the opportunity of meeting with Community Chests and Councils and State and Welfare Departments for consultation on day care problems. Many of our states have good laws regarding the protection of children in day care centers but others have no such laws and still others have laws but no provisions for implementing them.

I am delighted to report that the Board authorized a Day Care Committee meeting to be held in December of this year, with a view to considering some of these problems. We look forward to an opportunity for guidance and stimulation from such a meeting. It will help the League as it continues to serve the field of day care.

MRS. J. HORTON IJAMS,  
Board Member, Child Welfare League of America

# A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES ON PUBLIC CHILD WELFARE

All communications received in response to the League's request for comments and criticisms of its tentative draft of "A Statement of Principles and Policies on Public Child Welfare" (see May, June, and July, 1950 issues of CHILD WELFARE) were carefully analyzed prior to an all-day meeting of the League's Committee on Public Welfare Policy. Based on these comments, the Committee made some changes in order to make more clear some points which had been misunderstood and to incorporate some suggested additional thinking. The League's Board of Directors voted approval of the Committee's October, 1950 draft of the Statement as it appears in this issue. The Statement should be considered as a whole since its various parts are interrelated.

The League's President is now appointing a committee which will undertake to study principles and responsibilities in private child welfare and to submit, in corresponding fashion, a statement for consideration of the Board and membership.—S. H. C.

## Foreword

THE principles and policies which here follow are the out-growth of the League's long experience in the field of services for children. Since the League's inception thirty years ago, there has been representation in the League of child caring agencies, both under private and under public auspices, which have united in formulating standards for the better care and protection of the nation's children.

The League is the only national child welfare agency with accredited membership based on standards. As an increasing number of public agencies are applying for League membership, there is need for the League to formulate a statement of principles and policies to serve as a guide for the League's staff in counseling with public departments and other agencies on their child welfare programs and on social planning for children, also as a guide in evaluating legislative proposals relating to public child welfare.

This statement of principles and policies does not in itself constitute standards for accrediting public agencies for League membership. In general, the same standards for services to children in their own homes, in foster family homes, in day care, or in institutions should apply whether the agency providing that service is administered under governmental or voluntary auspices. This statement is directed primarily to agencies under public auspices which include in their program social services to children. In stating principles and policies for these public agencies, the aim is to make clear the public agency's responsibility and to enunciate some principles and policies applying to public agencies.

## General Concepts

1. The fundamental function of a democracy is the conservation of the rights and opportunities of its people and the enhancement of their welfare. While this country has

produced a very high level of living, there are many families and children whose basic needs are still unmet.

2. The family, as the fundamental unit of society, has primary responsibility for the child. For children needing social services from a source outside the family, both governmental and voluntary agencies are essential in our society. Government, because it is the instrumentality representative of all the people, has an underlying responsibility for making public social services *available* for all children by the same concept that governs provision for public education. Such public social services should be provided without discrimination in respect to race, color, creed or residence.

3. Organizing the community for social services is a joint responsibility of public and private agencies where both types of agency exist. Such joint responsibility involves determining, state by state and community by community, the respective functions of their public and private agencies in relation to over-all planning for services to children. State public welfare departments have a responsibility for interpreting to the citizens the social service needs of children. Many communities and entire areas are without any social planning body under voluntary auspices. State public welfare departments therefore have a responsibility in state-wide social planning, encouraging planning to meet needs, and activating and assisting groups, where necessary, in carrying out plans.

4. Historically social services to children have been and still are largely administered in many areas by voluntary agencies and the question most frequently raised in recent years with the rapid expansion of public welfare programs is should public funds be spent for the care of children through a voluntary agency or a public agency. The principle to be enunciated here is that the expenditure of public funds is a responsibility of public agencies, which may utilize the services of private agencies when appropriate to meet the particular needs of individual children for whom the public agency is responsible. (See number 19.)

## State and Local Services

5. Direct services to children should be decentralized to such a degree as to be readily accessible to those who need them and yet be consistent with the providing of effective service. Such decentralization permits easier accessibility, better interpretation to the responsible community and enables the agency to be more sensitive to total community needs. In many states the pattern for decentralization provides for county welfare departments which include child welfare in their functions. Under a state administered direct care program, some of the benefits of decentralization may be secured through a system of district offices of the state agency. Any state not immediately ready to accomplish decentralization should be working toward it.

6. Child welfare constitutes a specialized aspect of the field of social work and requires staff with specific skills and appropriate professional training and experience.

7. In carrying out a state's responsibility for children there is need in every state for a state public welfare department, whatever its name, within which there should be established, preferably by statute, a division or unit of child welfare. There should be close coordination between the division of child welfare and other divisions of the department.

8. All employees of state and local public welfare departments should be selected through a state-wide system based on a classification plan, with examinations to determine qualifications and with appointment on merit. There should be an adequate system of public personnel administration applying to these employees.

9. As a means of providing a responsible relationship to the whole citizenry, it is desirable that the state public welfare department have a policy-making board of citizens. The board should be appointed on the basis of outstanding qualifications and individual contributions to the program and not primarily for political considerations. These board members should be broadly representative of the state from the points of view of industrial, professional, agricultural, cultural, racial and religious elements. One of the responsibilities of such a board should be to assure the employment of an administrator qualified by training and experience in public welfare administration to act as the executive of the department. This should apply whether that executive is appointed by the board or by the governor. If a state has a cabinet form of government with no policy-making boards, it is desirable that there be an advisory committee for the state welfare department, with its members broadly representative from the points of view indicated for a policy-making board. It is further recommended that there be an advisory committee for children's services to assure a sharing in points of view and to secure citizen support of public child welfare programs, unless this specific responsibility is carried by an advisory committee to the department as a whole.

10. In a state where the system of decentralization of services provides for county departments of public welfare, it is desirable that there be a local policy-making board or a local advisory committee with its members broadly representative from the points of view indicated for such a state board or advisory committee. Where there is a state administered public welfare program, with the system of decentralization that of district offices of a state department, an advisory committee is recommended for the district, with its members representative from the indicated points of view. It is further recommended that there be in such county or district units an advisory committee for children's services, unless this specific responsibility is carried by an advisory committee to the county or district unit as a whole.

11. With the aim of assuring specialized child welfare guidance of local social services for children, the staff of the state child welfare division should include child welfare consultants giving field service in respect to specific aspects of the child welfare program, such as casework and community planning for child welfare. The child welfare con-

sultants should work with any administrative field staff of the state public welfare department in respect to administrative problems of child welfare.

12. In fulfilling its responsibility, an agency with a program of social services for children should measure its services in terms of the needs of each individual child. To that end, in every local unit of public welfare service there should be caseworkers who have special skills in child welfare. Since at present there is an insufficient number of such workers, those employed should be placed in the organization where their skills may be utilized to the best advantage.

13. State public welfare departments should have legal authority to approve articles of incorporation for children's institutions and agencies, to license for stipulated periods (or continue controls under a system other than licensing, where such a system already exists) and to close in accordance with law those failing to meet minimum standards. Welfare departments, in discharging the above responsibilities, should utilize the services of appropriate functional departments of state and local government. There should be a definite provision for appeal through an administrative structure from the decision of a public welfare administrator. It is of the utmost importance for the child welfare division of the state public welfare department to offer to institutions and agencies continuing services based on an educational approach and with their participation to define adequate standards.

14. Foster family homes providing temporary or permanent care for one or more children not related to foster parents should be licensed under the legal authority of state public welfare departments, prior to the acceptance of a child for care. The state welfare department may certify private child placing agencies and local public welfare units to issue licenses to foster family homes used by their agencies, or the state department may itself issue the license based on reports from these agencies.

15. Where state law permits placement by parents for purposes of adoption, there should be a statutory provision that no individual may act as the agent of a parent in making such a placement. With the exception of placements by parents, the protection of children indicates need for a statutory provision that no child should be placed for legal adoption except through a private agency, which has been licensed or otherwise authorized by a state public welfare department to carry this function, or through a public administrative agency having legal authority to make adoptive placements. It is realized that such legal measures must be preceded or accompanied by a development of private and public services adequate to the fulfillment of these objectives. State public welfare departments have a responsibility, shared with other agencies, to make consistent efforts to develop adequate services.

16. Public welfare departments as administrative agencies must depend upon the courts as judicial agencies to act in all matters requiring adjudication; likewise, non-judicial social service functions should be carried by a welfare department rather than by a court. The court is

the only authority which may terminate parental rights, give legal custody of a child to a designated individual or agency, name a guardian for a child (whether an individual, a private agency or a public agency), grant an adoption decree, or make a commitment of a child. Public welfare departments as administrative agencies should have authority to provide service on voluntary agreements with parents without court commitment, as well as to accept children committed to them by the courts. Public agencies as well as private agencies may well make recommendations to the court as to persons or agencies qualified to serve as guardians. In instances where the court vests guardianship or wardship of a child in a public agency, a public administrative rather than a judicial agency should serve in this capacity. Responsibility for the discharging of the here indicated functions of a public administrative agency is preferably lodged in a local public welfare department rather than in a state welfare department.

17. To equalize opportunity for all children there is need of some provision for financial aid from state and federal funds for counties or other local units for services to and care of children.

18. It is important to recognize that foster care of children (received by the agency on voluntary arrangements with parents or on court commitments) in institutions or family homes should be utilized only after careful individual diagnosis and that no child should be placed in such foster care without due recognition of the special services each institution and family home can perform. When an agency provides care for a child away from his own home, the situation is inherently different from that in which the child is a part of a family group. For this reason it is important for a public welfare department to recognize that foster care of children requires special child welfare skills, differentiated from those skills utilized in other programs of the public welfare department.

19. When a public welfare department accepts responsibility for the care of a child, it cannot delegate to others its continuing obligation to see that the child is receiving adequate care in accordance with his needs. It is sound in principle for state and local public welfare departments to utilize, on a case by case purchase of care basis, child care facilities under private auspices when they meet standards of child care as established by such state public welfare departments and when the private facilities offer a needed service for the individual children concerned. When public funds are paid to private organizations, they should be given only in payment of care for individual children for whom the public welfare agency has accepted responsibility. It is recognized that in the care of private agencies there are many children whose care is financed from payments by parents, community chest funds and other private sources. Rates paid by the public agency in purchasing care should be commensurate with the nature and quality of service rendered. The public welfare department should have an understanding with the private agency as to which agency will be responsible for rendering service to the child's family whenever there is a possibility of rehabilitat-

ing the home. The public welfare department has a responsibility to consider from time to time such plans as the private agency has developed for the child and to plan with the private agency in the best interests of the child.

### Federal Services

20. Economic security of families is essential to the welfare of all children and the present provisions of the Social Security Act and other federal acts providing benefits and services should be continually scrutinized and broadened as the need is indicated to the end that no child be denied a minimum standard of living.

21. Equal opportunity should be provided for all children who need public welfare services, irrespective of race, color or creed in all the states, territories and possessions of the United States and without the limitations of legal residence. This can best be accomplished if the federal government, in cooperation with the states and voluntary agencies, provides leadership, and if the federal government furnishes such financial aid to states as will realize this objective. Improved casework and other preventive services designed to strengthen the home are basic essentials in this program. Toward this end, financial participation by the federal government in personnel training programs is of great importance.

22. To conserve the integrity of social services to children there should be a distinct unit in a federal department, whatever its official designation, and this unit should be administered by a person properly qualified in child welfare.



## NEW LEAGUE PROJECT

THE Child Welfare League has been receiving an increasing number of requests for information and consultation concerning residential treatment for emotionally disturbed children. Individual agencies presently offering such services have had similar demands made upon them. These requests reflect the great interest throughout the country in providing services for the apparently mounting numbers of children whose needs cannot be met in the usual program of child care agencies, child guidance clinics or mental hospitals.

Though the League has endeavored to serve our member as well as nonmember agencies through our information service, we have been keenly aware of the extremely sketchy nature of available information on existing residential treatment centers and our inability to provide comprehensive data.

During recent years a small number of specialized treatment centers for children have developed in various sections of the country. They are operating under the leadership of several professions, including education, social work and psychiatry. There is a critical lack of knowledge concerning the formation

and operation of their programs and much misunderstanding of them. No central source of information has existed concerning such programs.

In order to meet these requests for information and consultation, a study of residential treatment centers for emotionally disturbed children was needed. For the purpose of such a study, the League recently requested and received a two-year grant from the Field Foundation of New York and Chicago. The grant provides that the League conduct an analytical study of a group of representative agencies engaged in the treatment of emotionally disturbed children. The organizations studied will include those operated under medical auspices as well as those operated by social agencies. It also makes provision for a limited amount of consultation to individual organizations and communities that are either presently providing residential treatment or are considering developing such a service.

Mr. Joseph Reid, Assistant Executive Director of the League, is directing the study. An advisory committee has been appointed composed of individuals who are presently engaged in the operation of this service. Dr. Edward Greenwood, Director of Southard School of the Menninger Foundation, Topeka, Kansas, is chairman of the committee, which is at present composed of

Dr. Margaret Gerard, Consultant to the Jewish Children's Bureau and the Evanston Receiving Home of Chicago.

Mr. Hyman Grossbard, Clinical Director, Hawthorne-Cedar Knolls School, N. Y.

Mr. Maxwell Hahn, New York City.

Miss Lillian Johnson, Director of the Ryther Child Center, Seattle, Washington.

Mr. Morris Fritz Mayer, Resident Director of Bellefaire, Cleveland, Ohio.

Dr. Ralph Rabinovitch, Director of the Neuropsychiatric Clinic, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Dr. J. Franklin Robinson, Director of the Children's Service Center of Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

The League is well aware that all child care agencies are confronted with the problem of the seriously disturbed child. The presence of such children is certainly not confined to residential treatment centers. Much thought is therefore needed to develop effective ways of helping all the agencies which must cope with this problem. There is evidence that change in the function of institutions will continue increasingly during the coming years. The leadership which the League is called upon to give with respect to the direction in which institutional care of children should proceed must be based on tested knowledge. We trust that the study will help to provide a basis for information and consultation for those concerned with this problem. The present problems include the publication early in 1951 of a

bibliography pertinent to residential treatment. The plan also includes the publication of a comparative analysis of the programs of the centers that will have been studied.

Such a study obviously cannot be expected to resolve all the differences of opinion and philosophy concerning the treatment of children, but it is hoped that bringing basic questions into focus as they are reflected in practice will be a first step in stimulating the further research necessary to the development of the most sound methods of treatment of these children. It is anticipated that certain minimum essentials of personnel, finances, organization and administration can be formulated for establishing and operating a residential treatment center for emotionally disturbed children. The project is of significance to the entire field of child care for the deeper understanding of the needs of all children that must result.

### New League Members

Child Care Centers, Inc.

1420 North 7th Street

Milwaukee 5, Wisconsin

Mrs. Helen Lehman, Executive Secretary

Lutheran Welfare Society of Minnesota

2110 First Avenue South

Minneapolis 4, Minnesota

Henry J. Whiting, Executive Secretary

Rochester Children's Nursery

133 Exchange Street

Rochester 4, New York

Mrs. Alfreda F. Yeomans, Director

### New Provisionals

Children's Day Care Association, Inc.

515 West Jefferson Street

Fort Wayne, Indiana

Mrs. Fern M. Pence, Executive Director

Delaware County Children's Aid Society

13 South Avenue

Media, Pennsylvania

Miss Elizabeth Glover, Executive Director

Family and Children's Bureau

337 South High Street

Columbus 15, Ohio

Ralph C. Bennett, Executive Secretary

Family Service Association, Inc.

732 Armstrong Avenue

Kansas City 9, Kansas

Mrs. Helen F. Gant, Executive Director

United Family and Children's Society

703 Watchung Avenue

Plainfield, New Jersey

Howard Hush, Executive Secretary

Youth Bureau of Cleveland

1001 Huron Road

Cleveland 15, Ohio

Miss Elizabeth B. Noyes, Director

## THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE AGENCY IN COMMUNITY SERVICES

(Continued from page 9)

leadership in the community or serves to block progress.

Without attempting to specify all the major contributions of private services, their nature and scope are indicated by recalling that from the earliest colonial period individual and organized private undertakings have persistently fired our social conscience, spearheaded the development of our social philosophy and served, so to speak, as society's watchdog, to make certain that government services fulfilled their responsibilities. Social work as a profession owes its origin and much of its growth to private agencies and individual initiative. Likewise, it should be noted that in spite of the extension of public responsibility, the volume of privately supported services has greatly increased since the turn of the century, and there have been significant changes and developments in private-agency programs and practices. These developments have been primarily related to

1. changes in the nature and volume of human needs and the awareness of changing or particular needs and problems on the part of individuals or groups supporting private agencies;
2. the expansion of public responsibility in areas previously served exclusively or largely by private agencies;
3. the movement from amateur to professional services; and
4. the emergence of the concept of community planning and coordination of all community services.

Among the most significant developments influencing private services in recent years are the welfare services that have been established under the auspices of labor organizations and the greatly increased number of individual citizens, citizens' organizations and private enterprises which contribute to the support of specific private community agencies or through community-fund campaigns to private community services as a whole. The growing concept of citizen participation is reflected in these developments and augurs well for the future of both private and public services.

### Some Basic Differences between Public and Private Services

Throughout our history the development of all types of welfare services has moved step by step from person-to-person service to voluntary groups in the community and finally to the establishment of public responsibility. This movement has generally been correlated with increased volume of need and wider recognition of need. It should be pointed out, however, that while this has been a general pattern, pub-

lic agencies have frequently initiated advances into new fields of endeavor and it is particularly important that this be done where private resources are not available, or where the nature or scope of need calls for a broader base or greater resources than are available from voluntary sources.

And we ask, does this newer concept of government responsibility negate the necessity for or importance of voluntary social enterprises? The answer is, quite the contrary. For it raises their significance to greater heights and underscores the necessity for a dynamic partnership between private and governmental agencies. I use the word partnership deliberately and precisely, for there is no place in this field for a competitive market. This partnership should take into account the intrinsic differences in governmental and private agencies, and the interaction between them should be characterized by the flexibility and diversity required to meet the particular needs and circumstances of each state and community and to utilize the strengths of both public and private efforts. Is it really too idealistic to think that this is practicable?

Some of the factors that make for differences between public and private agencies have already been indicated. The five major ones, which were elaborated in scholarly fashion by Dr. Arlien Johnson at the National Conference of Social Work in 1948, are, briefly stated:

1. the basic motivation or underlying philosophy,
2. the legal bases under which each type of agency operates,
3. the volume and distribution of services,
4. the methods of administration, and
5. the sources of funds.

There are also certain basic differences among private agencies themselves. These differences relate mainly to their

1. origin and source of support,
2. nature and scope of purpose and program, including the motivation or philosophy of the donors, and
3. the methods of administration.

These differences obviously have a bearing upon the respective roles of public and private agencies in the general pattern of community services. The philosophical differences among private agencies, particularly in relation to charity and its expression of moral obligation through sectarian agencies, cannot be overlooked but must be recognized in terms of the purpose served.

In spite of these intrinsic differences there should be no clear-cut line of demarcation between the spheres of work in which public and private agencies function. Any attempt to establish mutually exclusive spheres of work will violate the basic partnership

between private initiative and government which characterizes every facet of our national life.

### Unique Characteristics of Private Services

It is the writer's belief that voluntary efforts in any sphere of work are a measure of our democracy. This belief is based upon the fact that any service or program under private auspices has three major characteristics which offer distinctive opportunities. While these characteristics may also be found in some of our public services, they will always be present in a lesser degree than that inherent in private agencies. Briefly stated, these characteristics are

1. Freedom of private agencies to initiate any undertaking they believe has value and at any time they wish.
2. Freedom to experiment under almost unrestricted conditions, for they can select the form of activity or service and can limit its scope. Their freedom in this respect also permits them to make observations and to demonstrate their findings. This offers the greatest opportunity for inventiveness in devising new types of services and new methods of care, education and guidance, and for giving support to the extension of such services and methods, where indicated, on a broader basis that makes them available to all individuals.
3. And finally, but vitally important, the freedom to change any and all aspects of their undertakings as they see fit or as progress indicates, and to maintain a high degree of flexibility in adapting their programs or services to individual, exceptional or new situations, demands, or needs.

It takes vision and courage, imagination, sensitivity and agility to use these strengths, but it has never been so important that we use them to the limit. Because of the conviction that private agencies have an obligation to use their special strengths and in so doing to maintain a vital relationship with the community and the government, one dares to say that failure to do so is a betrayal of their stewardship.

One questions the fulfillment of that stewardship when private agencies cry out in fear lest they be doomed to extinction by the expansion of government responsibility. For the threat to our private agencies is not government, even though public services have been and must continue to be extended into some of the spheres previously serviced largely or exclusively through private efforts. In reality, the threat lies within the agencies themselves and derives largely from a static rather than a dynamic concept of purpose.

### Public and Private—A Partnership

Many voluntary services have recognized the necessity for critical self-scrutiny and for redefining their objectives. In this process there has been increasing emphasis of late upon the three distinctive assets listed above. Along with this and for perhaps a number of different reasons, one discerns a tendency

to draw lines of demarcation as between spheres of work carried forward under private auspices and those under public auspices. As a result there seems to be some confusion in our thinking at this point, which might be distressing if the process were not so healthy!

While it is clear that private agencies have greater freedom to undertake experimentation or demonstration, let us not be inflexible and contend that this is all they should do. Nor is it objectionable for public and private services to work in overlapping fields, provided there is joint planning. The truly basic point is that we should always come back to our concept of partnership and to the nature of needs, rather than being concerned about rigidly defined roles or competition. Government should provide those basic services that we recognize should be available to all. The voluntary agencies should make a continuous contribution in new areas or in providing supplementary services for individualized or specialized needs difficult to provide for under a public program, or where there are special groups closely tied by religious belief or other factors. Even here they will find possibilities for experimentation, demonstration or research that may have wider application.

Furthermore, there are many types of specialized services expensive to operate which are needed by a relatively small number of individuals and may never be undertaken by public agencies. While sound public policy should be based upon the principle that public funds should be spent by public agencies, this does not preclude the purchase by government of such specialized services for individuals on a per capita basis as may be mutually agreed upon by public and private agencies. Nor does it preclude cooperative arrangements whereby there is joint planning and financing, as in the case of research, demonstration projects, or community planning.

In all instances there is the important matter of good standards. While the private agencies cannot and should not be expected to give services on a large-scale basis, they are uniquely suited to give the highest quality of service and to give continuous leadership in the improvement of quality. Notable advances have been made in improving standards of care, services and personnel through joint participation of private and public services. This represents the essence of partnership and can be extended into other areas.

This fear of government so often mentioned already is quite specifically related in some places to the question of financing. There are sharp differences of opinion on this, as on other aspects of this question. Experience in this country, which is more vividly

reinforced by that in European countries during the past decade, demonstrates the importance of voluntary support for private agencies. We have adhered in this country, with a few notable and, it can be contended, unfortunate exceptions, to the basic tenet that public funds should be expended through public agencies. Departure from that principle in the direction of public subsidies, or even the purchase by public agencies of a significant proportion of the services provided by any private agency, will inevitably result in serious limitations upon private initiative and likewise endanger development of adequate services for all who need them.

It is perfectly clear that reliance upon public subsidy necessarily jeopardizes the freedom and flexibility of the recipient agency—an asset which should be more prized than gold; it raises the question of the validity of its claim to voluntary community support. Likewise, to the extent that voluntary contributions are not adequate to meet the costs of any private service, there is evidence either that the volume of need has exceeded the capacity of private individuals and should be the responsibility of government, or that there should be reappraisal of the agency and its program. Furthermore, if our private resources are invested in services that reach only a limited number of individuals and yet are of a kind that should be available to all who need such services, is it not the responsibility of the donors and the agencies concerned to see that government assumes the responsibility for such services so that private resources may be free to give leadership in new directions or meet more specialized needs? We cannot overemphasize the fact that vested interests in a static institution in any facet of our society are a community hazard and an impediment to progress.

### Role of the Private Agency—A Continuing Challenge

The combination of unique characteristics inherent in private agencies vest in them infinite potentialities for continuing leadership and stimulation in the development of new and better methods and services in all areas designed to advance human living. To this end, they have an obligation to continue in the future, as they have so notably in the past, to blaze new trails; to serve as critics and standard-setters for public services; and individually and cooperatively on a community, state and national basis, to enunciate new principles and policies in respect to prevention and treatment of human needs and problems, and to support through appropriate action measures designed to put into effect such principles and policies.

In a time like the middle of the 20th century, when the pressures of insecurity have driven people to the extremes of hope and anxiety and spurred the com-

pulsive race for easy solutions, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., warns that

"if social catastrophe is to be avoided, it can only be by an earnest, tough-minded, pragmatic attempt to wrestle with new problems as they come, without being enslaved by a theory of the past, or by a theory of the future."

And, he concludes, whatever adjustments may compel us,

"the demands of the future will best be met by a society in which no single group is able to sacrifice democracy and liberty to its own interests."

In dealing with the broad social issues confronting our society today, we still have the choice of permitting our way of life to be laid barren by complacently or tenaciously clinging to tradition, special interests and prejudices that have lost their validity in a world that has tougher things in mind; or of demonstrating our traditional initiative, imagination and courage—in which case the potentialities for human development are infinite and majestic.



### NEWS FROM THE FIELD

#### International Union for Child Welfare

THE General Council of the International Union for Child Welfare met in London from June 6 to June 12, 1950. The findings and resolutions covered the following subjects:

1. A turning point in relief and child welfare policy (effects of governmental action on voluntary activities)
2. Child Welfare and I.U.C.W.
3. International Relief and I.U.C.W.
4. Adoption
5. Essential long-range activities for children (United Nations)
6. Declaration of the rights of the child and the United Nations
7. The repatriation of children
8. Refugee children
9. Children's international drawing competition

While the entire report is worthy of reading, only a few of the observations will be cited. The conference recognized that (1) "The solution of the different problems of the child ought to be sought within its natural setting, the family," i.e., wherever possible, the child should be enabled to live with his own family. (2) With respect to the relationship of public and private services the conference held that "what really matters is that the child be afforded the best possible protection against the danger threatening it, as well as optimum conditions for its development" and that "the roles of state, private and semi-public bodies are complementary." That is to say, both public and private services are essential. The Council recognizes state responsibility for:

1. Laying down the main lines of the national child welfare program, through appropriate legislation;

2. Seeing to the creation and the smooth running of necessary networks of services and institutions;
3. Assuming possibly direct control, i.e., direct service, in certain circumstances;
4. Insuring directly or indirectly the training of the qualified personnel required.

It sees among the various tasks of the private organization, "One important task in research and study throwing light on the needs of children for the most suitable ways of dealing with them; another is to inform and stimulate public opinion."

One of the sections is concerned with "Findings on Adoption." It covers four major subjects including the purpose of adoption as a safeguard to the interests of the child; better stated, to find a home for the child rather than a child for the home. It notes that countries' legislation and practice are slow to adapt themselves to this concept. It recognizes that with this basic concern "organized adoption is not to the detriment of the family but on the contrary." It then goes on to discuss some basic principles. These are similar to the basic principles stated by the Child Welfare League of America in its "Adoption Practices, Procedures and Problems." It adds, however, that

"It should be possible to cancel adoptions:

1. when one of the parties leads a criminal or depraved life
2. when the child proves to be insane or mentally deficient."

This statement indicates the conflict between recognizing that adoption should actually create a family legally, with all the responsibilities that a family carries when a child comes to it naturally, and our anxiety to protect adoptive families from the risks involved. With the focus of concern on the welfare of children, the problem would not be the possible basis for cancelling adoption but the help which a society must make available in order that family life may serve its purpose. Any child, whether natural or by adoption, should be protected when the parents lead a "criminal or depraved life." Courts under such circumstances have removed guardianship from parents, whether natural or by adoption. Secondly, when a child is unable to benefit by the family life in its own or in its adoptive home, and needs special care or treatment, there is a social responsibility to provide those special services. Responsible adults should give what help they can in order that such special care may be made available.

When adoptions have been made with due regard for the interests of the own parents, the child and the adoptive parents, then perhaps we will be able to view the problems that arise, as when a child is not developing normally, with due regard for the needs of the child and of the adults involved.

## BOOK NOTE

**THERAPEUTIC GROUP WORK WITH CHILDREN**, Gisela Konopka, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1949. 134 pp. \$2.50.

This book is a real contribution to the literature dealing with group treatment. The process with which the book deals is not new, but to date there has been too little material set down in record form to show what can be accomplished in group work with children. Mrs. Konopka is a forceful writer as well as a skilled group leader. In this book the children are vividly portrayed, and the reader is able to grasp the importance of the leader's reaction to people in groups.

The book consists primarily of two group records. The first is a record of the formation and development of a group of boys at a reception center of the Minnesota Youth Conservation Commission, and is in two parts—a record of twenty activity meetings and a record of discussion meetings. These boys, who were committed to the Youth Conservation Commission for observation and determination of a social plan to meet their individual needs, were projected into a dull, routine, rigid living experience with all their fears, insecurities and hostilities. The formation of the group, its activities and the interactions among the boys and the leader are described. A most interesting part of this record deals with the leader's discussion of problems faced by the youths—some who were about to leave the institution and others who were newly admitted—and illustrates the leader's ability to accept these boys, to help instill self-confidence and to provide them with opportunity for expression of their feelings and problems.

The second record deals with meetings of a group of girls referred to a child guidance clinic. In this record, Mrs. Konopka reveals the importance of selection and change of activity to meet existing situations. This record also presents clearly the importance of the leader's giving the girls a chance to be themselves, and to do and say what their problems and feelings dictate.

These records demonstrate that group-work skills can play an important part in treatment. They reveal the skill of the leader in directing group discussions which encourage individuals to talk about themselves and their problems and to begin to have some understanding of what has happened to them as individuals. The following excerpt reveals the concerns of some of the boys and shows how the leader attempted to deal with them:

"Now the conversation turned again to the reception center. Roy said that nobody trusts them here. W (worker) said this was not quite the case. W said she trusted them, and she was sure the Commission members and Miss K. (caseworker) did too. Didn't they feel it when they talked to one of them? Gus said earnestly that he had talked to Miss K. and he liked her, but he could not say yet whether she trusts him or he trusts her. W said she respected that, that it takes time to really trust a person. Gus came back to his wish to have parents. He said he wished he could be put on probation. W asked what he would do if he were. Oh, he said, he had met Arne here, and Arne would be his friend and take him home to his parents, and they would adopt him. . . ."

Some readers will wish that Mrs. Konopka had included material dealing with the basis for the formation of these groups. They will be interested in the reason each youth was invited to become a member of a particular group and what it was that

seemed to make it advisable for them individually to be associated with the other children.

This book has significance for those in the area of child welfare because one senses how much the children were helped through these group experiences. The content gives the caseworker a better understanding of what can be accomplished through treatment in groups when the leader has a sympathetic and competent understanding of individuals and their needs. It presents a challenge to child welfare workers to work more closely with those in the group-

work field in order that group experiences may be planned for children who will benefit from group interaction. It presents a challenge, also, to institutional personnel to provide skilled group-work services to children under care.

The reviewer believes that this book has real value as teaching material and as a basis for staff development programs, provided staff members have a basic understanding of the group-work process and the role of the leader.

ANDREW F. JURAS,  
*Child Welfare Director, Oregon State Public Welfare Commission*

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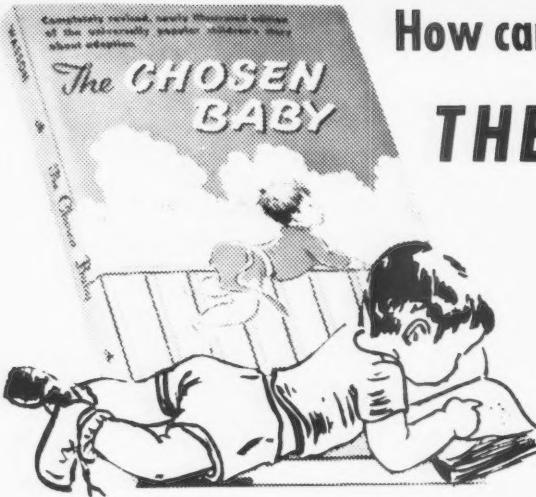
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